

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-120—HB 6534

Energy and Technology Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING GASOLINE VAPOR RECOVERY SYSTEMS

SUMMARY: This act (1) repeals requirements that gasoline dispensing facilities (e.g., gas stations) install stage II vapor recovery systems and (2) requires the facilities to decommission such systems. The systems have been superseded by on-board vehicle technologies, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has lifted the requirement that facilities in Connecticut and certain other areas have such systems.

The act also requires the owner of any gasoline dispensing facility with a stage I vapor recovery system to (1) perform a pressure decay test of the system annually and (2) notify the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner at least seven business days before the test on a form he prescribes. The federal stage I requirements, which address emissions of air toxics, remain in effect.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

REPEALED PROVISIONS

The act repeals provisions that required the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations to:

1. initially require installing a stage II gasoline vapor recovery system for all gasoline pumps at (a) new gasoline dispensing facilities that dispense more than 10,000 gallons of gasoline per month and (b) any such existing facility for all gasoline tanks that are replaced,
2. allow DEEP to reduce the threshold to 1,000 gallons per month, and
3. allow DEEP to require that the vapor recovery equipment (a) meet California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards and (b) be tested annually using CARB-approved methods.

Prior law allowed DEEP to require additional testing, but allowed anyone to install a stage II system that used only coaxial hoses and had been tested and approved by CARB.

DECOMMISSIONING VAPOR RECOVERY EQUIPMENT

The act requires the owner of any gasoline dispensing facility, by July 1, 2015, to decommission any installed stage II vapor recovery equipment. Under the act, decommissioning means rendering a stage II vapor recovery system inoperational by (1) permanently disconnecting all above-ground stage II vapor recovery equipment and (2) sealing all above- and below-ground vapor or liquid paths that may release vapor or liquid into the ambient air. Decommissioning does not require removing below-ground stage II equipment.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

The act requires that decommissioning:

1. start after the facility owner has notified the DEEP commissioner of the intent to decommission, which must occur at least 30 days before decommissioning, on a form prescribed by the commissioner;
2. be performed according to Section 14 of the 2009 “Recommended Practices for Installation and Testing of Vapor Recovery Systems at Vehicle Refueling Sites” of the Petroleum Equipment Institute; and
3. be completed within 100 days from initiation, unless the DEEP commissioner extends this deadline for good cause after the owner requests an extension.

Starting on the act’s passage date, the act bars facility owners from installing a stage II vapor recovery system.

BACKGROUND

Vapor Recovery Systems

Vapor recovery systems capture pollutants released during refueling that create ozone (smog). Starting with the 1998 model year, onboard refueling vapor recovery (ORVR) systems were phased into the vehicle fleet, and this technology is now in widespread use.

In 2012, the EPA determined that the emissions reductions from ORVR would soon surpass the emission reductions achieved by stage II systems alone. Accordingly, it waived the federal stage II requirements and has allowed states that have mandated stage II systems under the federal Clean Air Act to revise their state plans that implement the act to remove this requirement.

OLR Tracking: KM:JO:VR:ts